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**PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

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September 20, 2006

**To: Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies, and Interested Parties**

**Important Please Read:** This revised Notice of Preparation (NOP) is similar to a previous combined NOP and Notice of Scoping Meeting sent out in June 2005. The Scoping Meeting regarding the proposed project was held on June 21, 2005. This revised NOP is being sent out because: (1) a number of property owners said that they did not receive the June 2005 combined notice and (2) because the project description has changed (see below). Issuing this revised NOP with the current project description to the property owners, tenants and other interested persons, assures that everyone has received the required notice regarding preparation of a Supplemental EIS/EIR and is acquainted with the current description of the proposed project. Please be aware that the proposed project may affect your property. There will NOT be a second Scoping Meeting; however, there will be a series of five community meetings to describe the changes to the proposed project. (Dates and locations for these meetings are listed on the back of the notice). If you have comments on the content and/or scope of the proposed Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report, please send a written letter to Paul Maltzer, the Environmental Review Officer at the address above. The revised NOP is below.

**RE: CASE NO. 96.281E – CENTRAL SUBWAY, PHASE 2 OF THE THIRD STREET LIGHT RAIL PROJECT: NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF A SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT**

A Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) for the above-referenced project, described below, has been issued by the Planning Department. Information regarding the environmental process for this project is available by contacting **Joan A. Kugler**, whom you may reach at (415) 575-6925 or at the above address. For questions about the Central Subway Project, sponsored by the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA), contact **John Funghi** at (415) 701-4299.

**Project Description:** The proposed project is the second phase of SFMTA's Third Street Light Rail Project. The Planning Commission certified both phases of the project in a joint FEIS/FEIR on December 3, 1998. In response to public input during and subsequent to the 2005 public scoping process, SFMTA has created an additional alternative, the Fourth/Stockton Alignment Option B. As part of the SEIR, SFMTA will be evaluating potential changes to the 1998 FEIS/FEIR Alternative including: changes to the number and location of subway stations, the use of off-street station entries, the provision for ventilation shafts, and the use of a barrier type fare collection system. SFMTA is also proposing two options for a Fourth/Stockton Alignment running exclusively on Fourth Street, south of Market. It would operate on the surface of Fourth Street, from King Street north, to a double track portal between Townsend and Brannan Streets (Option A) or between Bryant and Harrison Streets (Option B) where it would go underground and operate in both directions along Fourth Street (south of Market) and Stockton Street (north of Market) to a terminus in the vicinity of Stockton and Jackson Streets in Chinatown. The depth of the tunnel at subway stations would range from approximately 60 feet to 100 feet. The new alignment would reduce transit trip time, surface traffic and parking impacts along Third Street, along with construction impacts and duration when compared to the 1998 FEIS/FEIR project.

Under the Fourth/Stockton Alignment, the number of subway stations would be reduced from four to three and the surface station at Third/King Streets would be eliminated. Option B would add an additional surface station on Fourth between Bryant and Brannan Streets. In both options, the Moscone Station would be located between Howard and Folsom, with entrances to the north in the sidewalks and to the south in property that would be acquired and made available for Transit Oriented Development. The Market Street and Union Square subway stations would be combined at one location on Stockton between Geary and Ellis Streets, with connections to the

north in the Union Square plaza and connections to the south using the Powell Station entrances to the BART/Muni Market Street Subway. The station in Chinatown would be located in the vicinity of Stockton and Clay Streets in Option A and in the vicinity of Stockton and Washington Streets in Option B, with proposed off-street entrances in property to be acquired by SFMTA. The Chinatown Station and Moscone Station subway entries would also accommodate above ground vent shaft structures that are necessary for emergency ventilation. For the Union Square/Market Street Station, these vent shafts would be integrated into the east terrace of Union Square in Option A and in the Ellis/O'Farrell Garage in Option B. The Fourth/Stockton Alignment would include a construction variant to extend the running tunnels another 2,000 feet north of the Chinatown Station to facilitate construction and provide for a future extension to North Beach. Other proposed changes include the use of Tunnel Boring Machine technology to reduce surface impacts and construction time, and the introduction of a barrier type fare collection system now required by SFMTA in subway operations. The SEIR will also update the project operating plan, including car requirements.

These Project Changes May Have A Significant Effect On The Environment. The Planning Department has determined that a Supplemental EIR (SEIR) must be prepared for the proposed project prior to any final decision regarding whether to approve project changes. This determination is based upon the criteria of the Guidelines of the State Secretary for Resources, Sections 15063 (Initial Study), 15064 (Determining Significant Effect), and 15065 (Mandatory Findings of Significance). The Federal Transit Administration has also determined that a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) must be prepared and a joint document will be issued. The purpose of the SEIS/SEIR is to provide information about potential significant physical environmental effects of the revised project that were not previously presented, to update the environmental setting as required, to identify possible ways to minimize the significant project effects, and to describe and analyze possible alternatives to the proposed project. Preparation of an NOP or environmental document does not indicate a decision by the City to approve or to disapprove the project changes. However, prior to making any such decision, the decision makers must review and consider the information contained in the environmental document.

Probable Project Environmental Impacts: The revised project would need to be analyzed for potential land use, air quality, noise, transportation, biology, hydrology, visual, geology, hazardous materials, cultural resources, and construction impacts. The Fourth/Stockton Street Alignment Options A and B and the North Beach construction tunnel variant would affect buildings not previously evaluated for historic, land use, noise, vibration, visual and construction impacts. The proposed acquisition of property to accommodate Central Subway station entries and ventilation shafts outside the public right-of-way could have visual, neighborhood, land use, noise, vibration, cultural resources, and construction impacts. At Chinatown and Moscone Stations the acquisition of property would require business and residential relocation and create opportunities for Transit Oriented Development. At the Union Square/Market Street Station the provision of an entry in Union Square would require an analysis (Section 4(f) federal evaluation) of the impact of the project on a public park.

The SEIS/SEIR will analyze the proposed project changes described above relative to the original Central Subway project cleared in the 1998 Final EIS/EIR. The original FEIS/FEIR project included a shallow subway crossing above the Muni/BART tunnels at Third and Market Streets, and single-track portals between Brannan and Bryant Streets on Third and Fourth Streets. The SEIS/SEIR will also evaluate a No Project Alternative, which would include the newly completed Third Street Light Rail Initial Operating Segment and associated bus changes.

Written comments on the scope and content of the future Supplemental EIS/EIR should be sent to Paul Maltzer, Environmental Review Officer, San Francisco Planning Department, 1660 Mission Street, Suite 500, San Francisco, CA 94103. Comments are due to Mr. Maltzer by **November 10, 2006**.

Documents relating to the proposed project are available for review, by appointment, at the Planning Department's Major Environmental Analysis office, 30 Van Ness Avenue, Suite 4150. Please call Joan A. Kugler at (415) 575-6925 for an appointment. Documents can also be viewed at the SFMTA Web Site: [www.sfmta.com/central](http://www.sfmta.com/central).

If you have questions concerning environmental review of the proposed project or would like to be placed on the environmental mailing list, please contact Joan A. Kugler at (415) 575-6925 or in writing at the address above.



# Central Subway Alignments



1998 FEIS/FEIR Alignment



Proposed Fourth/Stockton Alignment (Option A LPA)



Proposed Fourth/Stockton Alignment (Option B Modified LPA)

# Upcoming Central Subway Meetings

## CHINATOWN MEETING

Tuesday, October 17, 2006 (6:30 - 8:30 pm)  
Gordon J. Lau Elementary School  
Multipurpose Room  
950 Clay Street (between Stockton and Powell)

## NORTH BEACH MEETING

Thursday, October 19, 2006 (6:30 - 8:30 pm)  
Jean Parker Elementary School  
Multipurpose Room  
840 Broadway (between Powell and Mason)

## UNION SQUARE/DOWNTOWN MEETING

Tuesday, October 24, 2006 (6:30 - 8:30 pm)  
SPUR  
312 Sutter Street, 5th Floor (between Stockton and Grant)

## SOUTH OF MARKET MEETING

Thursday, October 26, 2006 (6:30 - 8:30 pm)  
Salvation Army, Yerba Buena Corps  
360 Fourth Street (between Harrison and Folsom)

## CENTRAL SUBWAY COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP MEETING

Wednesday, November 1, 2006 (6:30 - 8:30 pm)  
SF Municipal Transportation Agency  
1 South Van Ness, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Main Conference Room  
(corner of Market Street)



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## HOW TO REACH US

### PLANNING DEPARTMENT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS:

Joan A. Kugler  
Planning Department  
1660 Mission Street, Suite 500  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
Phone: (415) 575-6925  
Email: jakugler-planning@sbcglobal.net

### SFMTA FOR PROJECT DESIGN QUESTIONS:

John Funghi  
Municipal Transportation Agency  
1 South Van Ness, 3rd Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
Phone: (415) 701-4299  
Email: central.subway@sfmta.com

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Website: [www.sfmta.com/central](http://www.sfmta.com/central)  
Project Info: (415) 701-4371



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